

'Testes in overdrive': Male efforts to improve attractiveness can damage ability to have children

Scientists have uncovered an evolutionary paradox where men damage their ability to have children during efforts to make themselves look more attractive. Taking steroids to get a buff physique or anti-baldness pills to keep a full head of hair can damage fertility.

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Anabolic steroids mimic the effect of the male hormone testosterone in the body and are used as performance-enhancing drugs to increase muscle growth. They are regularly used by bodybuilders.

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Anabolic steroids fool the brain's pituitary gland into thinking the testes are going into overdrive. So the glands react by shutting down the production of two hormones – called FSH and LH – which are the key hormones that drive the production of sperm.

The researchers say there is a similar theme in men using medication to prevent male pattern baldness. The drug finasteride changes the way testosterone is metabolised in the body and can limit hair loss, but [side effects](#) can include erectile dysfunction and a hit to fertility.

Prof [Allan] Pacey told the BBC: "I would say more anabolic steroid users are likely to become sterile than you would think – 90% probably.

Read full, original post: [Fertility paradox in male beauty quest](#)